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The burden of history(?): Remembering the Holocaust and Attitudes toward Asylum Seekers in Israel

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Two connected studies examine how universalist and particularist views of the Holocaust influence Israeli Jews' attitudes toward asylum seekers. Study 1 (N = 500) investigated the degree to which universalist and particularist perceptions of the "lessons" of the Holocaust correlate with exclusionist views toward asylum seekers. It was found that a universalist perception of the "lessons" of the Holocaust was negatively related to exclusionist attitudes, and a particularist perception positively related to exclusionist attitudes—even after controlling for religiosity and political affiliation. Study 2 comprised three survey experiments (N = 298, 280, and 320, respectively) investigating whether presentation of universalist versus particularist texts about the Holocaust would impact exclusionist attitudes. It was found that exposure to a universalist text reduced negative attitudes toward asylum seekers and increased support for treating wounded Syrians in Israeli hospitals. Exposure to a particularist did not increase exclusionist attitudes.

Keywords: collective memory, exclusion, Holocaust, Israel, asylum seekers

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In his 2015 speech marking the first Day of Remembrance for Refugees and Expellees, German President Joachim Gauck compared the post–World War II displacement of Germans to the current African refugee crisis, declaring that: "Seventy years ago, a poor and ruined Germany managed to integrate millions of refugees. Let us not think ourselves capable of too little today …" (Berlin, May 20, 2015). Such mobilization of history for current political purposes has become common practice. Collective memory—the transmission of social meaning from a group's historical past—plays a vital role in "containing" the meaning attributed to the nation (Reicher and Hopkins 2001). As such, it forms a significant symbolic resource, frequently being exploited by political actors to legitimize particular political goals (Liu, Sibley, and Huang 2014).

Several studies have demonstrated how collective memory influences contemporary political issues and public opinion (Canetti et al. 2018; Hanke et al. 2018; Hirschberger et al.

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2017; Kurtiş, Adams, and Yellow Bird 2010; Kus, Ward, and Liu 2014; Mols and Jetten 2014; Schori-Eyal, Halperin, and Bar-Tal 2014; Schori-Eyal et al. 2017; Sibley and Liu, 2012). While the importance of collective memory is generally acknowledged the interpretation and framing of historical events for current political purposes remains fiercely debated. Politicians, statesmen and -women, and public figures frequently enlist collective memory of past events in the service of their political agendas. Given that different players and groups frame particular historical events in different and at times conflicting ways (Liu and Hilton 2005; Zerubavel 1996), the interpretation and relevance of historical events and figures is contested.

Although the role collective memory plays in shaping attitudes toward current issues is widely acknowledged, the difference between *a priori* perception of the meaning of a historical event and the way in which it is *represented* has been largely neglected. Public belief that a historical event is relevant to a current state of affairs is not always consistent with citizens' responses to its political framing. Many Germans, for example, believe that WWII legacy imposes upon them an obligation to help refugees. Liberal and left-wing Germans may thus agree with President Joachim Gauck's use of history to justify a policy of accepting asylum seekers. Members of the Alternative für Deutschland party or the Pegida movement, on the other hand, are more likely to violently object to such a line of argument. The fact that people recognize an event in their country's history as teaching important "lessons," in other words, does not necessarily mean that they will all agree with a particular framing of it in justification of current policy.

In this study, we analyze the extent to which both *a priori* perceptions of historical events and their variant representations affects public attitudes. Specifically, we examine universalist and particularist readings of the Holocaust and the way in which these influence attitudes toward asylum seekers amongst the Israeli Jewish populace.

For many years, the Holocaust was perceived and portrayed within the Jewish world as a unique, incomparable genocide particular to the Jewish people. Over the years, alongside this particularistic view, a universalistic approach also developed. According to the a universalistic approach, it is a pan-human legacy, with ramifications for humanity as a whole. Rather than focusing specifically on the Jewish perspective and "lessons" to be drawn from it, many draw more universalist "lessons" from it, or embrace both views (Auron 2012; Klar, Schori-Eyal, and Klar 2013). Universalist and particularist framings of the Holocaust also prompt disparate responses to current events. When the Holocaust is framed in universal terms, it tends to be mobilized in support of universal goals; when it is framed in particularist fashion, it is more often pressed into the service of particularist objectives.

In order to address these two issues—the lessons drawn from a historical event and its framing for current political purposes—as distinct phenomena, we conducted two studies. In Study 1, we examined the extent to which universalist/particularist "lessons" Israeli Jews draw from the Holocaust correlate with exclusionist views toward asylum seekers, while controlling for alternative explanations. In Study 2, we conducted three survey experiments to analyze how universalist/particularist representations of the Holocaust impact Israeli Jews' attitudes toward African asylum seekers (Studies 2a and 2b) and the treatment of Syrian casualties in Israeli hospitals (Study 2c [universalist only]). Hereby, we sought to determine whether and how people's *a priori* perceptions of the Holocaust correlate with their reaction to its universalist/particularist framing.

1. Perceptions of the Past, Its Representation, and Contemporary Political Issues

In the wake of Maurice Halbwachs' conceptualization of collective memory (1992 [1941]) as widely-shared general knowledge of past events that is not necessarily based on personal experience, collective memory has come to signify the transmission of the meaning a group attributes to its unique historical past. Over the years, collective memory has been explored across a variety of disciplines and in a number of frameworks (Misztal 2003), including its relation to nationhood and/or intergroup relations (for example Allpress et al. 2010; Branscombe et al. 2015; Canetti et al. 2018; Hammack 2001; Hilton and Liu 2008; Hirschberger et al. 2017; Liu et al. 2014; Pennebaker, Páez, and Rimé 2013; Rees, Allpress, and Brown 2013; Vollhardt 2013; Wohl and Branscombe 2005). It is now commonly accepted that collective memory can be mobilized

to imbue current political and social issues with specific meaning. Studies of groups involved in traumatic events (both as victims and perpetrators) demonstrate that the way in which such events are framed is likely to affect the type of response. Wohl and Branscombe's research (2005), for example, has shown that when the Holocaust is framed as a general human phenomenon rather than a uniquely German-Jewish experience, people were inclined to judge the perpetrators less harshly (see also Vollhardt 2013). Bilewicz and Jaworska's (2013) findings similarly indicate that the way in which the role played by Poles during the Holocaust is portrayed changes the way in which Polish students regard Jews and, to a certain degree, Jewish Israeli students' views of Poles. In a different context, Kurtiş, Adams, and Yellow Bird (2010) found that divergent framings of the American Thanksgiving holiday affected the way in which the respondents perceived national glorification. Studies conducted in the context of the Israeli-Arab conflict produced comparable findings (Bar-Tal 2013; Halperin and Bar-Tal 2011; Hirschberger et al. 2017; Schori-Eyal et al. 2014; Schori-Eyal et al. 2017). Evoking the memory of the Holocaust, for example, increases Jews' militancy and reduces support for compromises designed to bring about peace (Canetti et al. 2018).

Two insights can be drawn from the social-psychological studies of collective memory. Firstly, collective memory has an important impact on intergroup relations, serving as a powerful source of mobilization. Secondly, the influence it exerts is complex, the same historical event being amenable to diverse interpretations and the drawing of disparate, even conflicting, "historical lessons." The social-psychological approach focuses on the identity of an entire group—generally a national or ethnic community. This accords with Hilton and Liu's definition of the historical charter as "a widely shared and iconic representation where selective elements of group history, its causes, and consequences have been elaborated into a quasi-legal form that gives moral and sometimes legal implications for group action" (2008, 351). While this all-inclusive approach to group identity is pertinent for the study of intergroup relations and identity, however, it also tends to bias our understanding of the effects of collective memory—the latter being an arena of dispute.

Sociological accounts of collective memory highlight its controversial aspects. Forming an important symbolic resource for legitimizing political goals and political mobilization, it is not necessarily either an accurate or a static representation of the past. It is frequently enlisted in the service of specific goals. The same historical event can be adduced in different ways by diverse communities. The implications or "lessons" drawn for current political situations can thus diverge significantly (Misztal 2003; Zerubavel 1996). Studies of national ceremonies—the primary transmitter of collective memory—reveal, for example, that national rituals elicit dissimilar responses amongst disparate groups, the meaning attributed to national days varying amongst different segments of society (Coopmans et al. 2015; Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008; Schuman, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Vinokur 2003).

The understanding and use of collective memory frequently follows political divides (Hepworth 2017). In the dispute over the most appropriate way to commemorate the traumatic past in their countries, leftists in Germany and Spain, for example, are more likely to hold their country responsible for wrongdoing and rightists to defend the national past.

2. The Collective Memory of the Holocaust in Israel, Asylum Seekers, and Dissimilar Interpretations

Although the number of Holocaust survivors is rapidly dwindling in Israel, the collective memory of the Holocaust remains vivid (Feldman 2013; Lazar et al. 2004; Zertal 2005). Two divergent interpretations are prevalent in Israel: particularist and universalist (Klar, Schori-Eyal, and Klar 2013; Rinkevich-Pave 2008). The former regards the Holocaust as leading directly to the establishment of Israel in 1948: a strong and independent state is the sole way of ensuring Jewish survival. Accentuating the need for self-reliance, this attitude is skeptical of universal norms—which failed to save Jewish lives during WWII (Zertal 2005, 4). In the most comprehensive investigation of the memory of the Holocaust in Israeli society to date, Canetti et al. (2018) found that exposure to the rituals of Holocaust Remembrance Day was associated with greater support for intergroup violence, mediated by higher levels of national identification.

The universalist perception focuses on the moral lessons of the Holocaust—primarily the obligation to be neither perpetrator nor passive bystander (Klar et al. 2013). Although less dominant, this representation is also occasionally used to legitimize policy (Auron 2012)—the fight for the recognition of refugees from conflict regions such as Vietnam, Bosnia, and Kosovo, for example (Herzog 2009). It has been conspicuous for its absence in the debates over the recent influx of asylum seekers from Africa, however, whose numbers have now reached nearly sixty thousand—primarily Eritreans and Sudanese crossing into Israel from Egypt. While a very small number of Darfurians have been granted asylum, the current Israeli government policy toward African asylum seekers is in general one of detention and deportation. Refusing to recognize them as refugees, the official discourse defines them as "infiltrators" that are just seeking jobs in Israel (Duman 2015). This representation promotes exclusionist attitudes (Hochman 2015), levels of which are already relatively high in Israel (Hercowitz-Amir, Raijman, and Davidov, 2017). While some NGOs and asylum seekers' representatives have cited the Holocaust in criticizing the government's policy (Yacobi 2011), this appeal has had little effect on Israeli exclusionist policy. As Kalir observes, the "Israeli national narrative in seeing the injustice that has been done to Jews historically as the justification for a Jewish state that guarantees dignified citizenship primarily for Jews. (2015, 594–95). The universalist understanding of the Holocaust thus appears to have had little influence on the policy adopted toward asylum seekers.

3. The Current Research

In light of the notion that interpretations of collective memory influence segments of society diversely, this study focuses on how differential framings impact attitudes toward current political issues. It thus explores (a) *a priori* perceptions of the Holocaust and the "lessons" people draw from it, and (b) responses to universalist/particularist representations of the Holocaust.

In order to address these two issues, the research was divided into two sections. In Study 1, we examined the extent to which the universalist/particularist "lessons" Israeli Jews draw from the Holocaust correlate with exclusionist views toward asylum seekers, controlling for religiosity, political attitudes, national identification, and nationalism. Cross-sectional in design, this study's power to analyze representations of collective memory was limited. We therefore followed it up with three survey experiments designed to discover whether universalist/particularist representations of the Holocaust per se affected attitudes toward asylum seekers (Studies 2a and 2b) and the treatment of Syrian casualties in Israeli hospitals (Study 2c [universalist only]).

4. Study 1: The "Lessons" Drawn from the Holocaust and Attitudes toward Asylum Seekers—A Correlational Study

In Study 1 we assess whether existing beliefs, reflected in the drawing of universalist/particularist "lessons" from the Holocaust, correlate with attitudes toward asylum seekers, controlling for alternative explanations.

4.1. Participants

While studies of collective memory traditionally adopt social-psychology experimental approaches that involve sampling students in labs, we sought a more diverse and non-lab sample. We recruited participants via an online panel that conducted web-based surveys. Completing an online questionnaire in exchange for a sum equivalent to US $2, the participants were invited to take part in a "study about social and political issues"; neither the Holocaust nor asylum seekers were mentioned directly.

Only Israeli Jews were recruited. While the sample was heterogeneous (N = 500; 50.4% women; mean age 41; 14% born outside Israel; 55% secular; 30% high-school education or less), it was not a probability sample. Nor should it be regarded as a representative sample of Jews in Israel. These limitations notwithstanding, online panels possess two advantages. Firstly, the evidence indicates that, despite demographic differences, online panel and population-based survey experiments yield similar findings (Revilla et al. 2015; Weinberg, Freese, and McElhattan 2014). Attention levels and socially-desirable responses also differ only minimally between lab and online settings (Clifford and Jerit 2014). Secondly, panels enable a broader set of participants than those available under lab conditions.

Table 1: Exploratory factor analysis of universalist and particularist "lessons" (Study 1)

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
The lesson of the Holocaust is that Jews can rely only on themselves.	.053	.855
The lesson of the Holocaust is that a strong Israel is necessary to protect the Jews.	.121	.808
The lesson of the Holocaust is that the Jews have to be strong and to protect themselves.	.119	.893
The lesson of the Holocaust is that we cannot expect help from other countries in times of crises.	-.117	.713
The lesson of the Holocaust is that Israel is obligated to help those that are persecuted.	.883	.003
The lesson of the Holocaust is that Israel should condemn persecution of minorities.	.827	.075
The lesson of the Holocaust is that Israel should help weak and persecuted nations.	.901	-.006
The lesson of the Holocaust is that we should understand others' suffering.	.808	.080
Eigenvalues	3.15	2.51
% variance accounted for	39%	31%
Internal consistency	α = .87	α = .82

Note: Extraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization

4.2. Instruments

The dependent variable—"endorsing an exclusionist policy toward asylum seekers"—was measured using four items measured using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, to 7 = *strongly agree*): (a) "Israel should deport asylum seekers"; (b) "Israel should ignore asylum seekers' applications"; (c) "While their requests are being considered, asylum seekers should be kept in detention camps"; and (d) "Israel should be generous to asylum seekers" (reverse coding). The items loaded on a single factor that accounted for 67% of the variance (α = .83). The primary independent variables—universalist and particularist "lessons" of the Holocaust—were adopted from Rinkevich-Pave (2008). They were tested using eight items designed to represent universalist and particularist lessons. Table 1 present the results of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of these items.

The EFA yielded two factors with clear distinctions within the factor loadings (third factor eigenvalue = 0.66). The very weak intercorrelation (r = .09) indicated that the factors were almost orthogonal. While the particularist scale (M = 5.76; SD = 1.21) enjoyed greater support than the universalist scale (M = 5.02; SD = 1.32), both were highly endorsed in the 1–7 range. The analysis also included a set of variables commonly employed to determine attitudes toward minorities—socio-demographic background (age, gender, education, SES), religiosity, political identification, national identification, and nationalism (see Appendix A).

The correlations between the universalist and particularist "lessons," the key socio-demographic variables, and political ideology demonstrate the distribution of attitudes amongst diverse segments of the population (Table 2). The "lessons" variables were uncorrelated with education and income, thus not varying between social classes. Gender was also found to be uncorrelated with the "lessons" variables. Older people tended to support both sets more, possibly due to an age-cycle effect, cohort effect, or both. Religiosity was negatively correlated with universalist but not particularist "lessons." The only variable negatively correlated with universalist "lessons" and positively correlated with particularistic "lessons" was a rightist political stance. These findings support the notion that the "lessons" of the Holocaust are held diversely across ideological—but not socio-demographic—lines.

Table 2. Correlations between universalist and particularist "lessons" and background variables (Study 1)

	Particularist	Universalist
Gender (0=male; 1=female)	-.061	.005
Education	.024	.087
Income	.000	-.008
Age	.258***	.198***
Religiosity	.050	-.178***
Political affiliation (right)	.221***	-.246***

Note: $N = 500$

4.3. Results

Table 3 presents the results of a hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting endorsement of an exclusionist policy toward asylum seekers, constructed in order to examine the unique contributions of the universalist and particularist "lessons" of the Holocaust. Model 1 included religiosity, political affiliation, and age. Model 2 added key variables for explaining exclusionist attitudes (national identification and nationalism). Model 3 further covered the "lessons" variables. The universalist "lessons" stance was negatively correlated and the particularist "lessons" view positively correlated with exclusionist attitudes. The "lessons" also exhibited the strongest associations—greater than key factors such as political affiliation, religiosity, and nationalism. Their 9.6% contribution to the reduction in the unexplained variance beyond Model 2 illustrates their importance for explaining attitudes toward asylum seekers.

In a final model, not shown in Table 3, we additionally analyzed potential interactions by including as predictors the product terms between universalist and particularist "lessons" on the one hand, and religiosity and political affiliation on the other. None of the interaction effects turned out to be significant, all $p > .29$.

Table 3. Predictions of exclusionist attitudes toward asylum seekers (Study 1)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-.038	-.052	-.075
Religiosity	.109*	.056	.073
Political affiliation (right)	.416***	.343***	.198**
National identification		-.105*	-.117**
Nationalism		.284***	.217***
Universalist lesson			-.303***
Particularist lesson			.222***
R^2	.229	.281	.377

Note: $N = 500$. Table entries are standardized beta coefficients.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Overall, the findings show that Jewish-Israeli particularist and universalist views of the "lessons" of the Holocaust impact attitudes toward asylum seekers. In line with the findings of Liu et al. (2014) regarding the role of collective memory, these perspectives play a role over and above both religious/secular and left/right divides and other key factors such as nationalism. Support for universalist "lessons" was clearly negatively correlated with exclusionist attitudes. Support for particularist "lessons" was clearly positively correlated with exclusionist attitudes.

5. Studies 2a, 2b, and 2c: The Dissimilar Effects of the Representation of the Holocaust upon Attitudes toward Asylum Seekers—Experimental Studies

In Study 1, we examined respondents' *a priori* perception of the "lessons" of the Holocaust via a cross-sectional survey design, focusing on the way in which people's pre-existing understanding of the Holocaust was related to their attitude toward asylum seekers. Despite controlling for other variables, the design of Study 1 did not allow us to test any *causal influences of representations* of the Holocaust on attitudes. It was thus

followed up by Studies 2a, 2b, and 2c adopting an experimental design to investigate whether exposure to different representations of the Holocaust (particularist/universalist) would change attitudes toward asylum seekers.

5.1. Study 2a: The Effect of Exposure to Framings of the Holocaust upon Attitudes toward Asylum Seekers—Between-subjects Design

5.1.1. Participants and Design

As in Study 1, participants were recruited via an online panel and completed an online questionnaire in exchange for a sum equivalent to US $2 ($N$ = 298; 51.3% women; mean age 42; 18% born outside Israel; 51.5% secular; 35.3% high-school education or less). Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (described below): (a) universalist representation (n = 96), (b) particularist representation (n = 98), and (c) a control condition (n = 104). No significant sociodemographic differences obtained between the three conditions. The respondents were informed that participation was anonymous and given the researcher's contact details in case of queries.

5.1.2. Procedure and Pilot Studies

As the primary goal was to examine whether exposure to particularist/universalist representations of the Holocaust would affect attitudes toward asylum seekers, the manipulations were constructed as texts reflecting these framings. In order to distinguish between historical representations and current events, the manipulation refrained from referring to the "lessons" to be drawn from the Holocaust, restricting itself to uncontaminated representations of the Holocaust in school textbooks. A rather weak manipulation was chosen in order to avoid evoking strong emotional reactions. In contrast to other studies investigating inclusive/exclusive representations of the Holocaust—which, examining respondents' reactions on the basis of open questions, sought to evoke their emotional response to the description of the Holocaust as a "crime against humanity" or a "crime against Jews" (Canetti et al. 2018; Hirschberger et al. 2017)—our focus lay on analyzing representations of the Holocaust *per se*. Participants were asked to read a text taken from a school textbook on the Holocaust; those in the control condition read a neutral text about computer studies. All participants were informed that they would be asked a number of questions afterwards.

The *universalist manipulation text* was entitled: "Genocide: Not Just for Jews," and ran as follows:

The annihilation of the Jews during the Holocaust is not a unique event in history. During WWII, the Nazis decimated other groups in Europe, such as the Romani and Poles. Since the Second World War, there have been other cases of genocide, such as Rwanda and Darfur. In fact, genocide is more characteristic of humanity than we like to admit. Researchers estimate that more than 100 million people have been killed in genocides during the twentieth century alone.

The *particularist manipulation text* was entitled "The Holocaust: A Unique Event in Human History," and ran as follows:

The annihilation of Jews during the Holocaust is a unique historical event. Although the Nazis acted abominably toward other people, only the Jews were subject to systematic elimination. While ethnic oppression is common in history, the scale of the Holocaust and number of victims is unprecedented and unparalleled. The extermination of a third of the Jewish people is unique and exceptional in history. The Holocaust is also considered unique due to the deadly use of technology for the industrial liquidation of Jews in the death camps. Researchers agree today that the Holocaust is a unique historical event.

Two pilot studies were conducted in order to examine the framing manipulation. In the first, the texts were randomly assigned to a sample of Jewish-Israeli students (N = 85; 54% women; mean age 25; 75% secular). Participants were asked to read the text and then write a sentence summing up what pupils would understand from the text in order to verify that their interpretations were in line with the manipulation. Analysis of these sentences demonstrated the intended difference between the universalist and particularist framings. Pilot participants also answered three items addressing universalist vs. particularist representations: "The Holocaust was not a unique event"; "Other nations have experienced similar events to the Holocaust"; and "Other nations have been victims of genocide" (scale from 1= *strongly disagree*, to 7 = *strongly agree*; α = .80). As intended, the mean in the universalist condition was higher (M = 6.03; SD = .96; n = 44) than in the particularist

condition (M = 3.71; SD = 1.52; n = 41), as indicated by a t-test, $t(83) = 8.425$, $p < .001$. Additional analyses using items from the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988) showed that that the manipulations did not affect participants' feelings, all $p > .28$.

In the second pilot study, we adopted a within-/between-subjects design based on an online survey (N = 230; 49% women; mean age 42; 67% secular; 31% high-school education or less). Participants first answered the brief three-item scale measuring universalist vs. particularist understandings of the Holocaust described above. They were then asked about issues unrelated to the topic, such as their TV watching and internet usage habits. At this point, they read one of the manipulation texts and answered a series of descriptive questions to verify that they had understood it. Finally, they again answered the universalist interpretation scale they had completed at the beginning of the questionnaire (α = .69 pre; α = .73 post). In the universalist condition (n = 100), the universalist framing scale was found to be significantly lower in the pre- (M = 4.34; SD = 1.54) than the post-assessment (M = 4.89; SD = 1.67), $t(99) = -3.77$, $p < .001$. In the particularistic condition (n = 130), however, it was significantly lower in the post- (M = 3.80; SD = 1.65) than in the pre-assessment (M = 4.25; SD = 1.56), $t(129) = 4.65$, $p < .001$. Overall, the pilot studies supported the validity of the manipulations as reflecting universalist and particularist representations of the Holocaust and had no effect upon emotional responses.

The control group of Study 2a was given a text related to school computer studies. Although identical in length and structure to the historical texts, it was unrelated to the Holocaust or any political issues. The attitudes toward asylum seekers exhibited by this group were thus unaffected by any historical framing. Prior to the reading of the texts, the manipulation groups were asked four questions relating to the importance of learning about the Holocaust in school in order to anchor their awareness. After reading the text, all three groups were asked five informational questions about what they had read.

5.1.3. Instruments

The scale assessing exclusionist attitudes consisted of the following items: "Israel should deport asylum seekers"; "Israel should not accept asylum requests"; "Israel should be generous to asylum seekers" (reverse coding); "While their requests are being considered, asylum seekers should have the right to work" (reverse coding). The response scale went from 1 = *strongly disagree*, to 6 = *strongly agree*. The items loaded on a single factor that accounted for 67% of the variance (α = .83).

Religiosity was measured by respondents' self-identification as secular, traditional, religious, or Ultra-Orthodox. These categories not being ordinal, a dichotomous variable was constructed to distinguish between secular (coded 0; 51.5%) and religious (traditional, religious, or Ultra-Orthodox; coded 1; 48.5%) respondents (Moore and Aweiss 2002).

5.1.4. Results

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the impact of the manipulations on attitudes toward asylum seekers revealed a framing-condition effect, $F(2,295) = 3.12$, $p = .046$. A focused comparison of the differences between the conditions for endorsing exclusionist policy revealed a significantly lower mean in the universalist (M = 3.54; SD = 1.44; n = 96) than in the control condition (M = 4.02; SD = 1.39, n = 104), $t(198) = -2.38$, $p = .018$. No significant difference obtained between the universalist and particularist conditions, $t(192) = -.77$, $p = .440$, however. The difference between the particularist (M = 3.70; SD = 1.33; n = 98) and control conditions (M = 4.02; SD = 1.39; n = 104) was marginally significant, $t(200) = -1.69$, $p = .092$. Overall, while those in the universalist condition exhibited less exclusionist attitudes toward asylum seekers than those in the control condition, the effect was moderate, explaining approximately 7% of the variance. While the particularist condition was also found to reduce exclusionist attitudes, this effect emerged only as a trend. The first conclusion is thus that exposure to the universalist framing reduced exclusionist attitudes to a limited extent. This did not hold true for the particularist condition.

In the next step, we sought to discover whether the effects of the experimental conditions were moderated by religiosity. To do so, we conducted a 3 (framing condition) x 2 (religiosity) ANOVA. This revealed a main effect of religiosity, $F(1,291) = 32.84$, $p < .001$, which was much stronger than the main effect of experimental condition, $F(2,291) = 3.602$, $p = .028$.

Large differences obtained amongst the religious and secular respondents across experimental conditions (universalist: secular $M = 3.05$ / religious $M = 4.07$; particularist: secular $M = 3.13$ / religious $M = 4.20$; control: secular $M = 3.76$ / religious $M = 4.32$); the interaction effect of condition and religiosity was not significant, $F(2,291) = 1.33$, $p = .322$.

5.2. Study 2b: Replication of the Representation Effect—Within/between-subjects Design

To validate the effects of the way in which the Holocaust is framed found in the study 2a, we replicated the study using a within/between design, measuring the manipulation effects upon the same respondents. This type of design eliminates subject variance in the error terms used to test treatment effects.

5.2.1. Participants, Design, and Procedure

Participants ($N = 280$; 51% women; mean age 42; 63% secular; 29% high-school education or less) were recruited in the same way as in Study 2a. They were randomly assigned to either a universalist ($n = 145$) or a particularist condition ($n = 135$). Participants' endorsement of exclusionist policies toward asylum seekers was assessed with the same items as in Study 2a, both before ($\alpha = .78$) and after exposure to the Holocaust texts ($\alpha = .83$). Between the first assessment and exposure to the text, in order to reduce potential sensitization effects, participants were asked several questions unrelated to the topic, such as their TV watching and internet usage habits.

5.2.2. Results

In line with the previous findings, participants exposed to the universalist framing endorsed exclusionist policies toward asylum seekers less in the post-treatment ($M = 3.20$; $SD = 1.40$) than in the pre-treatment assessment ($M = 3.37$; $SD = 1.35$), $t(144) = 2.01$, $p = .038$. Exposure to the particularist framing did not impact exclusionist attitudes, however; the post-treatment scores in this case were also lower ($M = 3.22$; $SD = 1.46$) than the pre-treatment scores ($M = 3.31$; $SD = 1.40$), but the difference was not significant, $t(134) = 1.58$, $p = .115$.

5.3. Study 2c: The Effect of the Universalist Representation upon Attitudes toward Treating Wounded Syrians in Israeli Hospitals—Between-subjects Design

The public discourse regarding asylum seekers in Israel frequently adduces the Holocaust lessons. The results of Studies 2a and 2b may reflect this fact, thereby undermining the generalizability of the findings. Our universalist text explicitly referred to other examples of genocide in Africa, thus potentially impacting the dependent variable measured in this study—attitudes toward asylum seekers who, in the Israeli context, are primarily from Sudan and Eritrea. An alternative dependent variable was therefore introduced to address these issues.

Study 2c investigated whether the universalist framing of the Holocaust affected attitudes toward an issue that is similar, but not related to Africa. Since the end of 2013, more than three thousand people wounded in the civil war in Syria have received medical treatment in Israeli hospitals. While Israel does not grant these patients asylum, the medical treatment they receive may reflect the principle of helping others in need. Israel and Syria being technically at war, this is a highly unusual case, constituting a type of "medical asylum." The dependent variable adopted was thus opposition to the treatment of wounded Syrians in Israeli hospitals. In light of the fact that the findings of Studies 2a and 2b indicate that dissimilar representations of the Holocaust exert no distinctive effects, Study 2c focused exclusively on the universalist manipulation.

5.3.1. Participants and Design

Participants ($N = 320$; 50% women; mean age 41; 45% secular; 34% high-school education or less) were recruited in the same fashion as in Study 2a and randomly assigned to one of two conditions—the universalist framing manipulation ($n = 158$) or a control group (as described in Study 2a; $n = 162$). No significant differences in socio-demographic variables obtained between the conditions.

5.3.2 Instruments

After participants had read the Holocaust text or the control text, opposition to the treatment of wounded Syrians in Israeli hospitals was measured on a five-item Likert scale (response options from 1 = *strongly disagree*, to 6 = *strongly agree*): "No

need exists to provide treatment to wounded Syrians in Israeli hospitals"; "Taking care of wounded Syrians is a waste of money"; "Hospitals should take care of Israelis not Syrians"; "The treatment of wounded Syrians should stop immediately"; and "Wounded Syrians should be expelled to Syria." The items loaded on a single factor that accounted for 73% of the variance (α = .90). In order to test whether effects of the experimental manipulation may be moderated by religiosity or political affiliation, these two variables were also measured. Religiosity was measured as in Study 2a. Political affiliation was measured by the following item: "There is much talk about left and right in politics. Where would you rank yourself along a left-right continuum, when 10 is the right end, 0 is the left end and 5 is the center."

5.3.3. Results

Opposition to treating wounded Syrians was found to be significantly lower (M = 2.63; SD = 1.41) in the universalist than in the control condition (M = 2.96; SD = 1.45), $t(318) = -2.074$, p = 0.039. The universalist manipulation thus appeared to operate in a similar fashion as in Studies 2a and 2b, with support for treating wounded Syrians greater in the universalist condition than in the control condition. Additional multiple regression analyses revealed that neither religiosity nor political affiliation exhibited any significant interaction effects with experimental condition, both $p > .55$.

6. General Discussion

In September 2014, a Yazidi named Elias Qasim attending a conference in Tel Aviv asked: "Have we forgotten the Holocaust? … You experienced genocide and at the moment we're experiencing genocide. Let's remember what happened in the '30's and '40s when the world shut its eyes …" (*Ynet News*, September 11, 2014). Hereby, he adduced a universalist representation of the Holocaust in order to foster sympathy amongst Israelis for the Yazidis under threat from the "Islamic State" in Iraq. This study looked at the way in which such appeals to history can change attitudes and mobilize support. Specifically, we analyzed whether Israeli Jews draw universalist or particularist "lessons" from the Holocaust and whether exposure to universalist and particularist representations of the event influenced their attitudes toward asylum seekers divergently.

In Study 1, we examined the extent to which Israeli Jews' universalist or particularist beliefs regarding the "lessons" to be drawn from the Holocaust were correlated with exclusionist views toward asylum seekers from Africa. We found that support for universalist "lessons" was negatively correlated with exclusionist attitudes, while support for particularist "lessons" was strongly positively correlated with such views. These "lessons" were associated with attitudes toward asylum seekers even when political attitudes, nationalism, national identification, and religiosity were controlled for. In other words, these perceptions held beyond alternative explanations.

While these results demonstrate the relevance of *a priori* beliefs regarding the "lessons" to be drawn from the Holocaust, they do not indicate whether differential representations of historical events *causally* impact attitudes. In Study 2—which took the form of three survey experiments (Studies 2a, 2b, and 2c)—we sought to determine whether exposure to universalist versus particularist representations of the Holocaust impacted attitudes independently of respondents' *a priori* beliefs regarding the "lessons" that should be drawn from the Holocaust. The results indicate that a universalist representation of the Holocaust reduced negative attitudes toward asylum seekers and increased support for treating wounded Syrians in Israeli hospitals. A particularistic framing did not heighten negative attitudes toward asylum seekers. These effects did not interact with either religious identification or political affiliation.

Overall, our research thus showed that while *a priori* beliefs in universalist and particularist Holocaust "lessons" were linked to attitudes in opposite ways beyond alternative explanations, exposure to variant representations of the Holocaust did not have opposite effects. Although a universalist framing reduced exclusionary attitudes, a particularist framing did not heighten them. In fact, the particularist framing effect ran in the same direction as the universalist framing effect in Studies 2a and 2b. Here, however, it was not significant.

These results must be interpreted within the framework of the studies' caveats. While the validity of the manipulation employed in Studies 2a, 2b, and 2c had been ascertained in a pilot test, the similar effect of the particularist and universalist

conditions calls for a deeper examination of the precise mechanism involved. Further development of alternative manipulations is required in future studies. The specific context of the Holocaust and its profound presence in collective memory must also be explored in other settings.

The findings clearly indicate that remembering the past affects attitudes toward contemporary issues, which is consistent with previous studies on collective memory, and memory of the Holocaust in particular. None of the latter, however, has examined the differences between *a priori* "lessons" from historical events and exposure to dissimilar representation of the events. The *a priori* "lessons" reflect the common social understanding of a historical event, forming part of what Hilton and Liu (2008) refer to as a nation's "historical charter." The findings of Study 1 clearly demonstrate that Israeli Jews believe that both universalist (the obligation to be neither perpetrator nor passive bystander) and particularist (self-reliance and skepticism of universal norms) "lessons" should be drawn from the Holocaust. These *a priori* perceptions are closely correlated with attitudes toward asylum seekers beyond alternative explanations. The representations presented in texts in Study 2 differed from "lessons" in reflecting one specific framing of historical events rather than people's pre-existing perceptions of them.

While particularist *a priori* perceptions were more closely associated with more exclusionist attitudes, particularist framing manipulations did not cause more exclusionist attitudes. At the same time, universalist "lessons" and exposure to universalist representations both reduced exclusionist views. What accounts for these dissimilar findings? One explanation relates to the social context of the studies. Although the pilot study provided clear support for a dissimilar understanding of the universalist and particularist framing amongst respondents, the effect of the particularist framing on their attitudes may have been limited by the fact that this accords with the dominant Israeli "historical charter" pertaining to the Holocaust. As Hilton and Liu (2017, 300) argue, historical charters "explain and legitimize a group's current political settlement, facilitate self-enhancing group categorizations, and structure political debate and justify collective courses of action." The Israeli historical charter of the Holocaust is predominantly formulated in particularist terms that help the country justify its policies and actions and protect itself against criticism (Zertal 2005). Israel's exclusionist policy toward asylum seekers being closely aligned with this charter, the respondents' reaction to the particularistic framing condition may thus have been restricted because it felt quite natural to them. The universalist condition, in contrast, may have been far less obvious to them—thus having a greater impact upon their attitudes. Beyond this possible contextual explanation, psychological explanations might also account for the differences. Additional studies are needed to further develop the distinction between *a priori* perceptions of historical events and effects of messages conveying different representations.

What are the broader implications of these findings? The way in which issues such as asylum are framed is crucial for the way in which political actors seek to legitimize policies. Studies of the representation of immigration in Western Europe distinguish between the nationalist approach, which focuses upon maintaining national boundaries, and the moral-universalist view, which champions human rights (Helbing 2014). When a frame or interpretive scheme is adopted in order to enhance a specific reading of history, its objective is to impact the way in which the subject is perceived. The German President's 2015 speech, for example, framed the post-WWII German refugee crisis in universalist terms, representing the current refugee crisis as a human rights issue. The findings of our current research suggest that this stratagem may be of rather limited value. While people's existing perceptions of historical events appear to be strongly associated with their attitudes, divergent framing may only have a partial effect. The ability to mobilize a specific reading of history in order to affect views toward refugees or immigrants may thus be rather less effective than might be assumed.

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Appendix. Additional scales used in Study 1

Variable	Item	Range
Age	Age (years)	
Gender	Male/female	0–1
Education	What is your formal education?	1–6
SES	What is your family average income?	1–6
Religiosity	How religious are you?	0 = Secular 1= traditional, religious, ultra-orthodox
Political identification	What is your political affiliation?	1–5
National identification	• I identify with Israel • Israel is an important part of my identity • The Israeli identity is important for me more than any other identity • It is not important for me to see myself as an Israeli	1–7
Nationalism	• The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Israelis • Generally speaking, Israel is a better country than most other countries • In comparison with other nations, Israel is very moral nation • Other countries can learn a lot from Israel	1–7